



The 1837 "Investigator" (above) was the first successful hard-coal burning locomotive owned by the DL&W. Left: a signalman tells an engineer to move his train forward.

Right: Ironmakers George and Seldon Scranton, founders of the DL&W, believed that railroads were going to revolutionize transportation and become the primary mover of goods and people.

The transporting of T-rails (right) and anthracite coal led to the expansion of the Scranton railway facilities, shown here in 1877 when steam railroading was expanding throughout the country.

The bituminous coal used to fuel most passenger locomotives made rail travel inherently dirty. The DL&W, however, used anthracite coal (right), which created less smoke, soot, and cinders. The fictitious traveler "Phoebe Snow," whose "dress stays white from noon to night" (above), advertised anthracite's clean-burning qualities for the DL&W.

An ad for the Dickson locomotive works reminds us that Scranton was once a major railroad manufacturing center. Right: William H. Truesdale, DL&W President, 1899-1925.

Railroads in the Age of Steam

Railroading has been called "the biggest business of 19th-century America." Animal- and gravity-powered rail transport had been used by quarry companies in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the Northeast since the early 1800s. The United States quickly adopted the steam railway once reliable locomotives suited to long-distance public transportation were available. After 1830 and the creation of better locomotive types, railroad investment in both Great Britain and the United States accelerated almost simultaneously. Britain's first true public steam railway, the Liverpool & Manchester, began operations in 1830, as did the first such American railway, the South Carolina Railroad.

In the 1830s and '40s America's railroads were small private affairs of limited mileage, scattered along the Atlantic seaboard from Maine to Georgia, with a few enterprising companies pushing westward into the Appalachians. By 1852, thanks to merchants demanding faster and more reliable means of transporting their goods, more than 9,000 miles of track had been laid, mostly in the

New England and Middle Atlantic states. During the next decade, American railroads grew into a coordinated iron network of more than 30,000 miles serving all the states east of the Mississippi River.

Railroad construction slowed during the Civil War (the first American conflict in which railroads played a major role as movers of troops and supplies) but resumed on a large scale immediately afterward. By 1860 the United States had 94,000 miles of track binding the country together; 20 years later it had 193,000. By the end of World War I in 1918, the country could boast more than 254,000 miles of track and 65,000 steam locomotives.

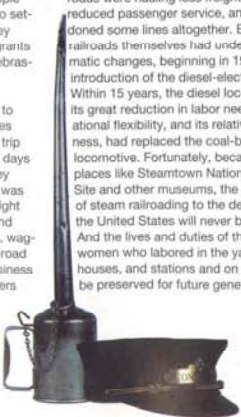
As the railroads expanded, so did the country. Between the Civil War and World War I, the United States was transformed from an agricultural to a manufacturing nation, thanks largely to the railroads. They brought raw materials like coal, oil, iron ore, and cotton to the factories and carried away steel, machines, cloth, and other finished products. They moved livestock, grain, and produce from

farms to the cities. And they carried people everywhere. Most of the immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania's Lackawanna Valley traveled there by train, just like the emigrants who settled Minnesota, the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas in the 1870s and '80s.

The railroads shortened the time it took to travel great distances, thus bringing cities closer together. In 1812, for example, a trip from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia took six days by stagecoach. In 1854 the same journey took 15 hours by train. By 1920 the trip was down to five hours. Rail deliveries of freight and passengers were generally faster and more reliable than those by stagecoach, wagon, steamboat, or canal packet. The railroad drove many canal companies out of business and lured away most potential passengers from riverboats and stagecoach lines.

Until the end of World War I, railroads carried the bulk of all freight and passengers. After 1918, they faced increased competition from automobiles and trucks. By the 1950s rail-

roads were hauling less freight, had reduced passenger service, and abandoned some lines altogether. By then the railroads themselves had undergone dramatic changes, beginning in 1925 with the introduction of the diesel-electric engine. Within 15 years, the diesel locomotive, with its great reduction in labor needs, its operational flexibility, and its relative cleanliness, had replaced the coal-burning steam locomotive. Fortunately, because of places like Steamtown National Historic Site and other museums, the contributions of steam railroading to the development of the United States will never be forgotten. And the lives and duties of the men and women who labored in the yards, roundhouses, and stations and on the trains will be preserved for future generations.



The DL&W Railroad and the Evolution of the Railroad Yard

In the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad was a major carrier of anthracite, the hard, clean burning coal found in abundance in northeastern Pennsylvania. The popularity of anthracite not only spurred the growth and expansion of the DL&W but also the four other major railroads that ran through Scranton: the Central of New Jersey, the Delaware and Hudson, the Erie, and the New York, Ontario and Western. The Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley Railroad, an electric shortline, began operating in 1903. It served local passenger and freight needs. Coal and railroads created a huge industrial complex in the Lackawanna and Wyoming valleys. Thanks largely to William H. Truesdale, the DL&W's president from 1899 to 1925, the railroad was operated with exceptional success and efficiency for many years. Many of the structures within Steamtown National Historic Site are legacies from the Truesdale administration.

The DL&W, like other early Eastern railroads, was an amalgam of smaller railroad lines

combined through mergers, consolidations, and leases. It was created in 1853 by George and Seldon Scranton (for whom the city of Scranton is named), who were seeking an economical way of hauling their iron products, particularly T-rails used in the construction of railroads. The Scrantons formed the DL&W by joining three railroads—the Cayuga & Susquehanna, the Lackawanna & Western (formerly the Leggett's Gap Railroad) and the Delaware & Cobb's Gap. At its height the DL&W operated on about 1,000 miles of mainline and branch track between Hoboken, N.J., and Buffalo, N.Y.

Northeastern Pennsylvania was a "melting pot" for immigrants who chose the Lackawanna and Wyoming valleys as the place to make a better life for themselves and their families. Those who settled in the Scranton area—some 30 ethnic groups—sought employment in silk mills, iron and steel factories, coal mines, and with railroads. At its peak the railroad yard employed several thousand workers, mostly immigrants and the sons and grandsons of immigrants, who

came to the United States during the last half of the 19th century. The Scranton railroad yard, now the home of Steamtown National Historic Site, is representative of 20th-century steam-era facilities that were used for the handling of coal, freight, and passenger traffic and the service and repair of locomotives.

Scranton's economic fortunes followed those of the DL&W and began to decline in the mid-1920s when the demand for anthracite coal started to subside. By the 1930s and 1940s gas and oil were replacing coal as a home and industrial fuel. The DL&W began using diesel locomotives, reducing the need for coal even further. The steam locomotive repair shop in Scranton closed in 1949. Many functions of the yard were shut down in the 1960s after the DL&W merged with its longtime rival, the Erie Railroad, to become the Erie-Lackawanna. The yard was finally closed by Conrail in 1980, following its 1976 acquisition of the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad. Steam-era functions have been restored to allow National Park Service staff to show how it was when railroads ran on steam.

1804 Richard Trevithick builds a successful steam locomotive in Great Britain.

1829 D&H Canal Company Railroad tests the "Stourbridge Lion," the first real steam locomotive in the United States.

1849-53 Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western Railroad is formed by combining the Cayuga & Susquehanna, the Lackawanna & Western, and the Delaware & Cobb's Gap railroads.

1869 The transcontinental railroad is completed between Omaha, Nebraska and Sacramento, California.

1904 "Phoebe Snow" first promotes travel on DL&W Railroad.

1949 The diesel-powered luxury train Phoebe Snow is introduced. Scranton locomotive shops close.

1960 DL&W and the Erie railroads merge to form the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad. M.G. McInnis of the Erie becomes president.

1978 Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) is formed from the merging of numerous railroads, including the Erie-Lackawanna.

1986 Congress establishes Steamtown National Historic Site.

1995 Restored and recreated roundhouse and museum complex opens to visitors.